

*The Judgments of GOD Considered.*

---

I N A  
S E R M O N

Preached in the  
PARISH CHURCH


O F  
P U T N E Y,

DECEMBER 7, 1755;

Occasioned by the late Earthquakes in *Spain* and *Portugal*.

By *JOHN FLUDGER*, M. A. K

Minister at *Putney*, Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of *St. Alban's*, and late Fellow of *Pembroke College*, OXFORD.

  
L O N D O N:

Printed for T. GARDNER, at *Cowley's Head*, facing *St. Clement's Church*, in the *Strand*.

---

M.DCC.LV.

The Judgment of GOD Considered.

IN A

SERMON

Preached in the

PARISH CHURCH

OF

PUTNEY

DECEMBER 7 1755

Collected by the late Harpurus in 1755 and 1756

JOHN FLETCHER, M.A.



Printed at the Bodleian Press, Oxford.

LONDON



The following

# S E R M O N

Is most humbly Inscribed and Presented

TO THE

INHABITANTS of *Putney*,

*By their very much Obligated,*

*And most Devoted Servant,*

J. Fludger.

The following

S E R M O N

Is most humbly inscribed and Presented

TO THE

INHABITANTS of PLYMOUTH

By their very much obliged

Author and Devout Servant,

J. Hildger.



IS A I A H xxvi. Ver. 9. latter Part.

*For when thy Judgments are in the Earth, the  
Inhabitants of the World will learn Righte-  
ousness.*

**T**HOUGH we ought to be extremely cautious how we interpret the Dispensations of Providence, into general or particular Judgments, yet Man must be lost to Observation, if he does not attend to any Thing extraordinary or uncommon in them. The general Laws of Nature; that is, the common Occurrences of Providence, are too little regarded, because daily and hourly repeated. As these Things hence grow familiar, we look upon them as flowing from Necessity, or rather we think not

of them at all. Hence it comes to pass, that the Sun, shining in all its Glory, is less attractive than a flaming Comet; and an Earthquake is more alarming than the daily Motion of the Earth at large; and an unexpected overflowing Tide, shall more affright us, than the Sight of the Ocean, *When the stormy Wind ariseth, which lifteth up the Waves thereof.*

MEN move, live, and have their Being, regardless of the Greatness and the Goodness of that Power by whom they exist, till some Evils, in Sicknes or in Losses, convince them, that their Life, and their Happiness in Life, can alone be secured by the Divine Protection. *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth,* in the figurative Style of Scripture, contain a most severe Reproach to thoughtless Man, as if he was less sensible than the inanimate World. It was a severe Reflection on the Jewish People, though *the Ox knew his Owner, and the Ass his Master's Crib,* that

Israel



*Israel did not know, the People of God did not consider.* And it is Matter of greater Shame to the Christian, as he owes greater Obligations to his God, that he can forget his heavenly Benefactor, and live as if there was no God in the World.

BUT if the Loving-kindness of the Lord, cannot lead Man to the Acknowledgment of the Divine Providence, and his Dependance upon it, God has Judgments in Store to teach him Righteousness, or to punish him for his obstinate Disobedience. God Almighty can arise to shake terribly the Earth, and the Waters, at his Command, shall forget their native Bounds, and destroy all before them. *Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapours, Wind and Storm,* and his great, and strong Army the Locusts, in Famine and Pestilence, shall fulfil his Word, and execute the Purposes of his Providence. *It is the glorious God that maketh the Thunder;* it is the same Divine Power who regulates the whole material

material System ; who can render it all harmonious for our Good, or can reduce it to a Chaos for our Destruction.

IF we ourselves then, and all Things around us, exist by the Divine Pleasure, and by that alone, every Thing should lead us to sure Trust and Confidence in God. This should direct us, therefore, to the Practice of all those religious Duties, which can secure the Divine Favour and Protection. And then whatever Things happen upon Earth, whether they come *for Correction or for Mercy*, whether they arise from the immediate Hand of Heaven in Judgments, or what is commonly called from Natural Causes, they will teach us Righteousness. And if they render us holy, just, and good, (the Lesson these Things should ever teach us) they will then obtain their End : An End to be wished and pursued, much rather than to search the secret Cause, why the Thunder roars, the Ocean swells and rages, or the Earth reels to and fro.

For



For then, though the Earth should open her Mouth and swallow us up, or the Swellings of the Sea should drown us, the Earth and the Sea shall give up their Dead, and restore us to a happy and eternal Being. Fire may descend from Heaven to consume us, but the good Christian shall rise victorious from the Flames. Corruption may seize the Body, but it shall afterwards put on Incorruption. Famine may starve it, or Pestilence may waste it, but it shall never more hunger, no more be capable of Pain, or Want, or Death. But to close these Reflections, which I shall do by attending to the Words of the Text.

I. To consider what we are to understand by *Judgments*.

II. To observe when they are *in the Earth*.

III. To shew the Uses we should make of them, *Then will the Inhabitants of the World learn Righteousness*.

B

*First,*

*First*, then. Various are the Significations of the Word Judgments, but the extraordinary Punishments which God inflicts upon any particular Person or People, those remarkable Chastisements with which God visits Man and Beast, best determine its Meaning in this Place. Murrain among our Cattle, Mildew in our Corn, the Plague among Men, any new raging Distemper, the noisome Pestilence, when Thousands and ten Thousands fall beside us; these Things mark the Judgments of God. Again, If Men die not the common Death of all Men, or if they be not visited after the Visitation of all Men, *if the Lord make a new Thing, and the Earth open her Mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertain to them, and they go down quick into the Pit*, and the Earth close upon them, then may ye understand this is a Judgment of the Lord: And if Fire shall descend from Heaven, and, in a miraculous Manner consume the Enemies of God, this also is a  
 Mark



Mark by which ye may know it. And if God breaketh up the Fountains of the great Deep, and openeth the Windows of Heaven, and the Waters in a Deluge shall sweep all before them, this in its Course must carry Demonstration of a Judgment. And indeed, Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth, may be all used as Instruments by God, in proclaiming to the World the Power of his Vengeance.

THESE are some of the plainest Instances, which denote the Judgments of Heaven.--- But Time would fail me to count them all, and Ability here is wanting : *For who hath known the Counsel of the Lord, and who shall declare all his Judgments ? His Ways are past our finding out, his Judgments are like the great Deep, not to be fathomed by Man.* But it deserves our Notice, though the Judgments of God are not always alike visible to us, that they never fail to perform his good Pleasure. The Terrors of the Lord, which  
mark

mark their Way in outward Ruin and Defolation, will indeed be seen and felt, and persuade Men of the Truth of them.

BUT there are Judgments of a softer Nature, no less certain to kill and to destroy : There are Judgments sent unto us, under the deceitful Smiles of Prosperity, as well as in the Frowns of Adversity. Men and Kingdoms when left to themselves, and deservedly left by God, when they have first forsaken Him, have walked in that Road, which has led them to their utter Ruin ; and their Ruin they have found from their Luxury, Corruption, and universal Love of Pleasure. *England*, it is to be feared, has much to dread from this Quarter, more perhaps, than from an Inundation or Invasion, or even the Shock of an Earthquake.

BUT to look a little into the Scriptures for some of the Judgments recorded in them. Who is not convinced of the great and fearful  
Judg-



Judgment of God, which the Marks of the Universal Deluge demonstrate to us to this Day, as well as the sure Word of Prophecy? Who does not acknowledge the heavy Hand of Judgment, which descended upon the *Egyptians*, when they, in vain, strove to pass the *Red-Sea*? Who among you is ignorant of that Variety of Judgments, with which *Pharaoh* was visited for the Hardness of his Heart? The Judgments of God appeared again, when the Earth opened her Mouth wide, and swallowed up *Dathan* and *Abiram*, and all that appertained unto them. And the all-powerful Hand of God was visible, when He destroyed the First-Born of *Egypt*, both of Man and Beast, in one Night; whilst against the Children of *Israel*, in the same Night, and in the same Country, no Hurt was done to either Man or Beast: Such Difference did the Lord place between the *Egyptians* and *Israel*, and such will He ever put between the Righteous and the Wicked. But when the House of *Israel*, in after Times,

revolted

revolted from their God, when they turned after other Gods to serve them, then did the Lord God arise to punish them terribly, and in the most dreadful Destruction of *Jerusalem*, he cut them off, as a People, from the Face of the whole Earth. And let every Kingdom and Nation be persuaded, that Judgments will descend on them also, if they forget the Lord their God. If, therefore, as Men, we have any Regard for ourselves, or, as Members of Society, have any Love for our Country, let us *be righteous in all our Ways, and holy in all our Works.*

*Secondly, To observe, When Judgments are in the Earth.*

THE Judgments of God, inflicted upon any private Persons, or any particular Nation, as delivered unto us in ancient History, make no great Impression; because these things happened in Ages long before us, in which we were no ways interested. Hence it comes  
to



to pass, that we can read of all the Plagues in *Egypt*, with Hearts as insensible of those things, as was *Pharoah's*. We can dig and search through the Ruins of *Herculaneum*, and survey its Remains with a pleasing Wonder : And any present Relation of any late Visitation from God, in the extraordinary Ruin of any Body of People, if far remote from us, for the same Reason, is little regarded. Hence we can hear of the late Destruction of the City of *Lima*, without any visible Surprise ; and the Shock of an Earthquake at *Constantinople*, gives us little Concern. But, when *Spain* and *Portugal* shall shake, sure *England* cannot stand unmoved ! Whose Heart does not weep within him, when he hears of the great Distress of these Nations ? How did their Hearts fail them for fear ! What Perplexity filled their Minds, when there were *Earthquakes in divers Places* ; when the Sea and the Waves were roaring ; when the more merciless Flames spared not the Remainder of their Habitations ? But, I forbear,---The Subject

ject is too dismal to dwell upon, and shall close it with this Lamentation, due to our unhappy Countrymen, due to Mankind in general, when overwhelmed with Afflictions, saying, *Alas! our Brethren.*

BUT we need not go Abroad for our Account of Earthquakes, or unusual Commotions of the Waters. We have heard with our own Ears, in our own Country, repeated Shocks of an Earthquake, and the Waters, in our own Land, have been strangely troubled and agitated. And though the Earth has not yet opened her Mouth to destroy us, and the Streams have not *gone over our Souls*; (and God grant they never may!) yet let not us imagine we are placed beyond the Reach of the like Destruction. God Almighty in every Nation, is alike able to save and to destroy, by what Methods, and by what Instruments he pleases. When God looketh down from Heaven, and beholdeth the Sins of Men, and seeth enough in every Kingdom



dom to provoke his Justice, or to excite his Mercy, *He will have Mercy, on whom he will have Mercy,* and whom he will punish, he will punish. And as hence, consistent with Justice and Mercy, one Nation perishes by a quick and sudden Destruction, which another escapeth; let the Objects of Mercy then remember, and with Thankfulness reflect, that it was of God's infinite Goodness, and not of their own Merits, that they did not come to the same fearful End. And that we never may, let us lay to Heart, what our Lord hath assured us, *That unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish.*

IT is not long since the Sword passed through Part of this Country, when Dread and Terror seized all Orders and Degrees of Men. And the present Situation of Public Affairs is enough to alarm us. For who knows their Issue? What Wars, and Rumours of Wars, from Abroad? What vast warlike Pre-

C

parations

parations at Home? And though the noblest Spirit now exerts itself that ever animated the *British* Nation, and though the clearest Justice pleads our Cause against our Enemies, yet, from the numberless Calamities inseparable from every Country where War shall come, we have abundant Reason to wish, that the Sword could give way to Justice, and to pray unto God, that jarring Nations were hushed in Peace.

BUT if God, in his Providence, shall cause War to rage in all its Fury, may he then of his infinite Goodness, fight against those who fight against us. And that we may be intitled to the Divine Protection, let us *put on the Armour of Righteousness, so shall the Lord Jehovah be our Strength, and become our Salvation.*

IT is not long since the Mortality of our Cattle began, (I mean in the Time of the late Rebellion,) but that we may not forget  
this



this Calamity, God hath been pleased to continue this Distemper in our Country to this Day. Ye, my Brethren, need not be reminded of this Evil, who have twice felt the destructive Effects of it. And if it is apparent, that this Distemper is propagated by Infection, yet let us look higher for its Cause and Continuance, at least till we can stop the Course of the Wind, upon whose Wings, as well as our Cloaths, that Infection may be conveyed. And since Experience hath long taught us, 'tis in vain to depend on Man to drive this Evil away from us, let us look up unto God, and invoke him in earnest Prayer, that he would be propitious to our Kingdom, that he would spare it, as he did *Nineveh* of old, that great City, in which were Multitudes of Persons, and *much Cattle*. And that God may be induced to turn his fierce Anger from us, let us, with the *Ninevites*, remember to turn from the Evil of our Ways.

IT is the Sense and Declaration of the Nation, in the Prayer compiled for this Occasion, that our Sins brought down upon us this Evil from Heaven : And as this Punishment is not yet removed from among us, it supposes that we have not yet departed from our Sins. Would to God there was no Occasion for this Supposition, and that Sin and Iniquity no longer existed among us; *then should our Oxen be strong to labour, there would be no Decay.* Happy should we be in such a Case, yea, blessed should we be, for the Lord would be our God. But,

*Thirdly, and Lastly, To shew the Uses we should make of God's Judgments, Then will the Inhabitants of the World learn Righteousness.*

LOVE and Fear are the great Motives to Men's Obedience; and the Love of God will ever Influence the good Man's Practice, and  
lead



lead him on from Virtue to Virtue. He will be in Love with Goodness on her own Account, and a Follower of all her Precepts for her present Pleasures, was there no *Hell* to punish the Wicked, was there no *Heaven* to reward the Righteous. But such is the Ingratitude and Degeneracy of most Men, that Fear alone can direct their Goings, and their Dread of Punishment can deter them from Impiety. And God, who knew what was in Man, and how disposed he is to transgress his sacred Laws, hath of his infinite Wisdom devised every Method to secure our Obedience, and thereby to secure our Happiness. Hence *Life* and *Death*, and *Heaven* and *Hell*, are placed before us, that Men may live, and not die.

HENCE *Judgments* as well as *Blessings* go through the World, and some Persons and Nations fall a Sacrifice to them, that others may consider their Ways, be convinced of the great Danger of Sin, and induced to look for their Safety and Happiness in the Service  
of

of their God. Thus was every *living Substance which was upon the Face of the Ground* destroyed by the Flood, not only for their Wickedness, but that *Noah* and his Family might remember the Lord their God. And God rained upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, Brimstone and Fire from Heaven, and overthrew those Cities and all the Plain, *and all the Inhabitants of the Cities, and that which grew upon the Ground*, that other Nations and Countries might keep the Way of the Lord. Now these, and whatever Examples are recorded in Scripture, are written for our Admonition that we may learn Righteousness, and be able to stand when the like, or any other dreadful Calamities, shall befall the Sons of Men.

THEN though God's *Judgments are in all the World*, though they hang over our Heads, or threaten us under our Feet, there shall no Evil happen unto us. For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of every Misfortune ;



tune; *God will defend them under his Wings, and they shall be safe under his Feathers, his Faithfulness and Truth shall be their Shield and Buckler.*

LET every one of us, therefore, with the pious *David*, in Righteousness say unto the Lord, *Thou art my Hope and my strong Rock, my God in whom I will trust; and that God who is our Hope, will be our Strength, a very present Help in Trouble. Therefore will we not fear though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea: Though the Waters thereof rage and swell, and though the Mountains shake at the Tempest of the same. For the Lord, who dwelleth on high is mightier. And if God be for us, who can be against us?*

May the Lord of Hosts be with us, may the God of *Jacob* be our Refuge for Jesus Christ his Sake.

F I N I S.

and they shall be safe under his shadow;  
his righteousness and truth shall be their shield  
and buckler.

Let every one of us, therefore, with the  
pious David, in righteousness lay unto the  
Lord, Then art my Hope and my strong Rock,  
my God in whom I will trust; and that God  
who is our Hope, will be our strength, a very  
present Help in Trouble. Therefore will we not  
fear though the Earth be moved, and though  
the Hills be carried into the midst of the Sea:  
Though the Mountains shake at the trumpet of  
the trumpet. For the Lord is to be praised on  
high it might be said for us, who  
can be against us?



May the Lord of Hosts be with us, may  
the God of Jacob be our Refuge for Jesus  
Christ his sake.



